

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A spark plug comprising:
an electrode, the electrode including an electrode segment situated at one end segment of the electrode, the electrode segment including an alloy containing copper.
2. The spark plug according to claim 1, wherein the alloy of the electrode segment contains platinum.
3. The spark plug according to claim 1, wherein the electrode has platinum in a proportion of 60 to 99 mass percent and copper in a proportion of 1 to 40 mass percent.
4. The spark plug according to claim 1, wherein the electrode segment contains at least one of rhodium and iridium.
5. The spark plug according to claim 4, wherein the electrode segment has platinum in a proportion of 30 to 89 mass percent, copper in a proportion of 1 to 40 mass percent, and rhodium in a proportion of 10 to 30 mass percent.
6. The spark plug according to claim 4, wherein the electrode segment has platinum in a proportion of 30 to 98 mass percent, copper in a proportion of 1 to 40 mass percent, and iridium in a proportion of 1 to 30 mass percent.
7. A spark plug comprising:
an electrode, the electrode including an electrode segment situated at one end segment of the electrode, the electrode segment including an alloy containing platinum and rhodium.
8. The spark plug according claim 7, wherein the electrode segment includes platinum in a proportion of 70 to 95 mass percent and rhodium in a proportion of 5 to 30 mass percent.

9. The spark plug according to claim 7, wherein the electrode segment contains at least one of iridium and nickel.
10. The spark plug according to claim 9, wherein the electrode segment includes platinum in a proportion of 30 to 94 mass percent, rhodium in a proportion of 5 to 30 mass percent, and iridium in a proportion of 1 to 40 mass percent.
11. The spark plug according to claim 9, wherein the electrode segment includes platinum in a proportion of 30 to 94 mass percent, rhodium in a proportion of 5 to 30 mass percent, and nickel in a proportion of 1 to 40 mass percent.
12. The spark plug according to claim 7, wherein the electrode segment contains at least one metal or at least one oxide selected from the group of yttrium, zircon, hafnium, titanium, tantalum, wolfram, osmium, ruthenium, gold, silver, and palladium, each in a proportion of up to one mass percent.
13. The spark plug according to claim 7, wherein the electrode includes a first electrode and a second electrode, and wherein a spark oversparks between the first electrode and the second electrode along a spark gap in response to application of a voltage, the spark gap leading to the electrode segment of the electrode.
14. The spark plug according to claim 7, wherein the electrode further includes an electrode base body, the electrode segment being situated on the electrode base body via laser welding, the electrode base body being composed substantially of nickel, the electrode base body having a copper core.
15. The spark plug according to claim 7, wherein the electrode is a middle electrode, and further comprising at least one ground electrode, an insulator and a housing, and wherein the middle electrode is regionally insulated by the insulator from the housing, and the at least one ground electrode is affixed to the housing.